

Application No.: 10/506,362
Filing Date: May 11, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 stand rejected. Claims 1, 3, and 8 have been amended. The amendments add no new matter. Thus, Claims 1-9 are presented for consideration and further examination in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Objections to the Drawings

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) for failing to include reference indicators for the “two substantially axially-facing sealing edges” recited in Claim 1, which has been amended to recite “a pair of sealing surfaces generally facing in opposite directions.” Applicant respectfully submits that the sealing surfaces in Figure 2 are already indicated with reference numeral 24b. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objections to the drawings.

Rejection of Claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner states that the recitation of “two axially-facing sealing edges” in independent Claim 1 renders that claim indefinite. Claim 1 has been amended to delete the recitation of “two axially-facing sealing edges” and to recite instead “a pair of sealing surfaces generally facing in opposite directions, each of which is formed on an end of the sealing disk and lies generally normal to [a] longitudinal axis of the coupling.” Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 has been clarified, and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, has been overcome.

Rejection of Claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Weh

In the Office Action, Claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,095,947 (Weh). The Examiner rejected dependent Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weh in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,464,042 (Haunhorst). With respect to the anticipation rejection of independent Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the

claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. See M.P.E.P. § 2131.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite “a sealing disk which can be moved in the axial direction of the connection coupling in a controlled manner towards the inlet valve and away from the same, and wherein the sealing disk comprises a pair of sealing surfaces generally facing in opposite directions, each of which is formed on an end of the sealing disk and lies generally normal to the longitudinal axis of the coupling.” The valve taper 7 of Weh “is a smooth-surfaced continuation of [the] piston’s interior” and is “sealed by a sealing element 43.” (Col. 5 ll. 1-5). The sealing element 43 is an O-ring disposed within an inner circumference of the control piston 10. (See Fig. 2). The sealing element 43 forms a stationary seal around the valve taper 7 relative to the control piston 10. The sealing surface of the valve taper is the circumferentially outer surface of the taper, and thus, does not “lie[] generally normal to the longitudinal axis of the coupling” but instead lies parallel the longitudinal axis of the coupling. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Weh fails to disclose at least a “sealing disk compris[ing] a pair of sealing surfaces generally facing in opposite directions, each of which is formed on an end of the sealing disk and lies generally normal to the longitudinal axis of the coupling.”

Independent Claim 1 has also been amended to recite “the sealing disk further comprising two abutment surfaces disposed between the pair of sealing surfaces, the two abutment surfaces being configured to limit movement of the sealing disk in both longitudinal directions.” In Figures 1 and 2 of Applicant’s specification, the abutment surfaces are the radially-extending surfaces of the sealing disk 24 which face in both longitudinal directions of the coupling. Applicant respectfully submits that Weh does not disclose the above-quoted structure.

The applied prior art of record does not cure these deficiencies in the Weh reference. Accordingly, because Weh does not disclose each and every element of Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of independent Claim 1 has been overcome.

Applicant notes that Claim 3 has been amended to recite that the “sealing surfaces engage in mutually opposite shoulders provided on the inside of valve slides of the ventilation and inlet valves at least when the coupling is in the connection position.” Support for this amendment can

Application No.: 10/506,362
Filing Date: May 11, 2005

be found in at least paragraph [0020] of Applicant's published specification. This amendment adds no new matter.

Claims 2-9 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1 and, thus, are patentable for at least the same reasons that Claim 1 is patentable over the applied art. Therefore, allowance of Claims 1-9 is respectfully requested.

No Disclaimers or Disavowals

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, the Applicant is not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. The Applicant reserves the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that the Applicant has made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims. Accordingly, early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

Any remarks in support of patentability of one claim should not be imputed to any other claim in this or a related application, even if similar terminology is used. Any remarks referring to only a portion of a claim should not be understood to base patentability on solely that portion; rather, patentability must rest on each claim taken as a whole. Applicant has not presented arguments concerning whether the applied references can be properly combined in view of the clearly missing elements noted above, and Applicant reserves the right to later contest whether a proper reason exists to combine these references.

Application No.: 10/506,362
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Applicant respectfully traverses each of the Examiner's rejections and each of the Examiner's assertions regarding what the prior art discloses or teaches, even if not expressly discussed herein. Although changes to the claims have been made, no acquiescence or estoppel is or should be implied thereby; such amendments are made only to expedite prosecution of the present application and are without prejudice to the presentation or assertion, in the future, of claims relating to the same or similar subject matter.

Any claim amendments which are not specifically discussed in the above remarks are not made for patentability purposes, and it is believed that the claims would satisfy the statutory requirements for patentability without the entry of such amendments. Rather, these amendments have only been made to increase claim readability, to improve grammar, and to reduce the time and effort required of those in the art to clearly understand the scope of the claim language.

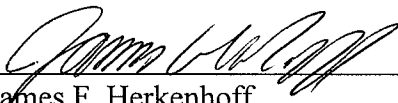
The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the noted rejections and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if an issue requires clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's attorney in order to resolve any such issue promptly.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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